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ABSTRACT

This paper on designing and implementing a stress management program in the workplace begins by defining stress. A brief overview of the relationship of stress to health and personal style follows. The subsequent discussion of the relationship between stress and work focuses on these topics: work contributes to stress; stress affects work performance; stress raises legal and medical issues; stress affects the business, itself; business pays many costs associated with stress; and family stress and work stress interact. Design of worksite stress management programs (WSMPs) is considered in terms of three basic elements: techniques for managing stress, delivery formats, and basic skills taught. In addition to highlighting reasons why the programs are implemented, the section on implementation describes four categories of WSMPs: awareness building, skills building classes, counseling, and organizational change. Summaries of several studies on the impact of WSMPs are provided. The paper concludes with examples of 10 WSMPs implemented by companies. Company name and address, contact person, and telephone number are given. (YLB)

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WBGH WORKSITE WELLNESS SERIES

STRESS MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

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Washington Business Group on Health
Washington, D.C.

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WBGH Worksite Wellness Series

STRESS MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

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STRESS MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

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STRESS MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

WHAT IS STRESS?

One of the consequence of the industrial era has been the rise of stress as a health and social problem. Stress seems to grow as a byproduct of the pressures, changes, and demands of modern life and work. Every person experiences stress, but people react to it differently. Some people believe there is little they can do to overcome its negative effects; they feel that stress is unending, inevitable, and uncontrollable. Other people thrive in stressful environments, finding it a source of stimulation, inspiration and excitement. Clearly, individuals' responses to stressful situations--from a new baby to added job responsibilities to a traffic jam--can be either positive or negative, and it is important to differentiate between stress that people perceive as a challenge and stress that is debilitating and a threat to health and well being.

Stress has been defined by Hans Selye as the "non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it" (Selye, 1974).

Stress:

- Is linked to almost every common disease (Cox, 1980). Most standard medical textbooks attribute anywhere from 50 to 80 percent of all disease to psychosomatic or stress-related origins (Pelletier, 1977).
- Helps people respond to the positive and negative demands of their lives. The responses brought on by perceived stress allow people to meet demanding pressures and crises with huge reserves of energy and then renew themselves when the test is over.

- Provides a challenge that fosters growth and learning. Stress is experienced in the form of risks, thrills, and creative challenges that make life meaningful to many people, and inspires growth and what has been called "peak performance" or "excellence."

HOW IS STRESS RELATED TO HEALTH AND BEHAVIOR?

Chronic stress can produce a wide range of effects on one's health and on one's behavior. But people may respond very differently to the same stimulus. Further, an individual may respond differently to a single stimulus, depending on the circumstances. For example, added job responsibilities may be seen as a positive and exciting challenge at one stage in an individual's professional growth, but as an unfair burden causing serious anxiety at another. So although a categorization of the effects of stress is arbitrary, such a listing also can be useful in understanding the far-reaching and widely varied responses to stressful events. Tom Cox (Cox, 1980) lists the following:

- Health effects - asthma, amenorrhea, chest and back pains, coronary heart disease, diarrhea, faintness and dizziness, dyspepsia, headaches and migraines, neuroses, nightmares, insomnia, psychoses, psychosomatic disorders, diabetes mellitus, skin rashes, ulcers, loss of sexual interest, and weakness.
- Subjective effects - anxiety, aggression, apathy, boredom, depression, fatigue, frustration, guilt and shame, irritability and bad temper, moodiness, low self-esteem, threat and tension, nervousness, loneliness, inability to make decisions and concentrate, frequent forgetfulness, hypersensitivity to criticism, and mental blocks.
- Behavioral effects - accident proneness, drug taking, emotional outbursts, excessive eating or loss of appetite, excessive drinking and smoking, excitability, impulsive behavior, impaired speech, nervous laughter, restlessness and trembling.

These reactions are brought on by a documented physiological response of the body to a threatening experience. Selye (Selye, 1974) breaks this response into three stages.

- The Alarm Stage - When a threat is perceived, a message is sent to the pituitary gland in the brain and a hormone is released. The hormone stimulates the manufacture of adrenalin and other hormones that cause increased breathing and heart rate, a rise in blood pressure, the release of sugars and fats into the circulation, and the tensing of skeletal muscles. These actions provide fuel and oxygen for quick energy, prepare muscles for strenuous action, improve sight and hearing, and produce other protective actions required for the "fight or flight" reaction.
- The Resistance Stage - After the immediate threat disappears, the body relaxes and returns to a normal baseline.
- The Exhaustion Stage - If the actual or perceived danger continues over a prolonged period of time, a new stage begins that can end in disease or, in certain cases, death by exhaustion. This wear and tear can affect any of the body's organs or systems and can result in high blood pressure, a heart attack, ulcers, or other serious health consequences.

While much stress results from external conditions that people have no control over - excessive noise, working conditions, and competing demands - a large portion of the stress that people experience is due in part to the way that they respond to stressful demands. Some people respond well to pressure, and are labelled "stress-resistent" or optimal performers. Others have difficulty responding to pressures, and their own behavior contributes to their difficulty.

For example, the most studied of these dysfunctional responses to stress is the Type A personality style, first formulated by Ray Rosenman and Meyer Friedman (Rosenman and Friedman, 1979), and the subject of countless studies. This style of response to stress contains elements of hurrying, doing many activities at

once, needing to maintain control over everything, feeling frustrated and resentful, and experiencing difficulty collaborating with others. Type A behavior has been connected with heart disease in scores of studies. But further research also has shown that people with this behavior style who experience a heart attack can learn new styles of behavior, and these new styles reduce the risk of further health crises.

Other aspects of personal style have been linked to ineffective stress management and health problems. For example, emotional unresponsiveness - the inhibition of anger and difficulty in expressing feelings - has been linked to various physical ailments. A global sense of meaningfulness and life purpose, on the other hand, has been linked to the ability to resist stress.

HOW IS STRESS RELATED TO WORK?

Stress and business interact in two ways.

- The pressure of work contributes to the stress experienced by employees. The environment, the structure of work, and the style of personal relationships in a business all can create undue stress for employees.
- When employees are under stress, business pays many of the costs related to that stress, both directly in the form of health care costs and indirectly in the form of lower productivity.

Work Contributes to Stress

Stress can effect how workers function on the job. The National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health has ranked 130 occupations and determined that twelve occupations have the highest stress - laborer, secretary, inspector, chemical lab technician, office manager, foreman, manager/administrator, waitress/waiter, machine operator, farm worker, miner, and painter.

Specific job factors also have been associated with stress.

- Work that does not allow the worker to participate in decisions about the work process;
- Jobs that place one in between two groups, such as supervisor and shop floor employees, or management and customers/clients;
- Jobs that demand more or less skill than one has;
- Receiving a job performance evaluation, or lack of clarity about expectations and standards about job performance;
- Changes in work demands, such as market shifts or restructuring;

- No clear career development path or opportunity for growth or advancement;
- Conflict with coworkers or supervisors.

While it is known that many work stressors stem from difficulties in the way the organization operates, such factors are not ordinarily part of worksite stress management programs (which focus on what the individual can do to manage personal stress). However, there are many organizational interventions that have as their goal to reduce stress and raise productivity, but which are not designated or thought of as stress management programs. For example, many companies have initiated extensive Quality of Work Life programs that increase employee participation and, thereby, reduce stress. (These efforts will be covered in detail in the WBGH Worksite Wellness Series report on **Healthy Companies.**)

Stress Effects Work Performance

Studies show that workers perceive stress to be a major problem at work. Businesses, too, experience the impact of stress on their employees through problems in work performance and in health outcomes.

- Control Data Corporation (CDC), Minneapolis, MN, reports that in its annual in-house Employee Health Survey, the problem "stress/anxiety/tension" always is at the top of the list, checked by nearly one-third of their employees. CDC has used the same survey with more than thirty other companies and has had the same responses - stress always tops the list of health problems.
- A study of student nurses found that when they experienced several personal stressful events, they were apt to suffer from a rash of accidents and job-related errors in the following weeks (Sheehan, 1981).

- A major insurer, St. Paul Fire and Marine, St. Paul, MN, has found that industrial accidents, productivity problems, health claims, and malpractice claims are clearly related to personal and work stress (see "Company Examples").

But stress also has some value and serves as a source of challenge and inspiration. Studies of peak performers and thriving work environments suggest that there is a level of stress that is productive and stimulating at work.

- Researcher Suzanne Kobasa compared two groups of high stress executives. Both groups had similar jobs in the same company, but one group had the most illnesses and health claims, and one had the least. The healthier group was characterized as stress-resistant. It was found that these stress resistant executives differed from their less healthy coworkers in three qualities:
  - o Openness to challenge;
  - o Involvement in work; and
  - o Sense of personal control (Kobasa, 1979).
- In another more recent study, it was found that the type of work environment that appears to enable one to deal best with stress has the same three characteristics as those associated with stress-resistant executives. That environment is one in which employees feel challenged, are involved and committed to the organization's goals, and where the worker feels he or she has a reasonable degree of control over work decisions (Jaffe and Scott, 1985).

Thus, there seem to be qualities that enable one to resist stress, and these are the same qualities that are associated with increased performance at work.

Leonard Moss (Moss, 1981) reports that the two-sided nature of stress has created a controversy at work. Many top managers, who themselves exhibit this stress-resistent style and tend to be healthier than their underlings, believe that their experience demonstrates that stress is good for performance. Yet, people in the middle and lower levels of an organization experience greater distress and more frequent health problems, due in part to difficulty managing stress that is imposed on them by top managers who perceive stress and pressures as positive job factors. Often, this type of organizational climate makes it difficult for managers to report stress problems or to elect to attend a stress management training program.

Stress Raises Legal and Medical Issues

The connection between work and stress raises interesting medical and legal issues. Since employees can obtain disability payments through workers' compensation insurance and pension funds when stress is connected to physical or psychiatric illness, the definition of work related stress is increasingly important. Throughout the country, workers' compensation claims due to work stress have risen, and some require a determination in the courts. For example, in the landmark case Carter vs. General Motors, an assembly line worker was awarded benefits for functional disability attributed to the accumulation of stress produced by his supervisor's criticism, combined with his difficulty in performing his job correctly.

In recent years, the courts have continually broadened the definition of work stress. The doctrine of "repeated injury"--where stress is due to the cumulative effects of repeated experiences of stress over a career--can be held responsible for a heart attack or other disability illness, even though there was no "unusual" stressful event just prior to the illness. Recent research by John Jones, Ph.D., of St. Paul Fire and Marine

indicates that work related accidents can be attributed to work stress, as well (see "Company Examples"). Thus, the reduction of stress at work is a legal and medical issue with deep financial consequences to companies.

Stress Effects the Business, Itself

Chronic stress to employees also can have a direct impact on the organization itself, resulting in absenteeism, poor industrial relations, poor productivity, high accident rates, high turnover, poor organizational climate, low morale, antagonism at work, and job dissatisfaction (Cox, 1980).

Business Pays Many Costs Associated with Stress

There is little doubt that the costs of stress to business are massive, including both the costs of illness associated with stress and the productivity losses. However, stress is just one contributing cause in a chain that leads to illness, so it is hard to estimate how much of the cost of these diseases should be charged off to stress. The task of measuring the costs of stress to business is further complicated because it is impossible to measure the effects of different sources of stress on a person, such as how many years of job stress or family stress contribute to a heart attack.

Formal research into the financial effects of stress programs on business has just begun.

- One study at the Equitable Life Assurance Society calculated the pre- and post-treatment costs of stress on work, including relationships with supervisors and coworkers, time away from job due to stress symptoms, clinic visits, and absenteeism. The program provided individual counseling and biofeedback training to teach

relaxation skills to people with serious stress problems or in high-risk categories. The cumulative cost-benefit ratio demonstrates that for each dollar spent on treatment the company saved $5.52 (Manuso, 1983).

- At New York Telephone, a stress symptoms check list found that 24 percent of participating employees had stress-related symptoms of sufficient severity to warrant intervention, and ten percent of the group needed psychiatric help. A meditation program (or counseling) was offered to many of these employees with a high level of success. Although, it was impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in terms of dollars and cents, Dr. Loring Wood, Medical Director, specualted that if NYT had been able to reach just half of the 24 percent with an intervention program, the company would have reduced the absenteeism by a minimum of 10 percent and saved $2,677 per person just for decreased absence. The cost of intervention was $300 per person.

Family Stress and Work Stress Interact

The task of understanding the relationships between work and stress is further complicated when one also takes into consideration the added pressures, demands, and changes of family life. In a review article, Charles Handy (C.L. Cooper, 1978) points out that the family can have a dual role in stress. It can create stress through pressures, conflicts, and demands that compete with work; or it can become an insulator from stress by providing social support, emotional validation, and life purpose to enable one to withstand the pressures of work.

Today only 10 percent of families consist of the traditional nuclear family, with one working parent and one homemaker. More common are the single-parent and dual-career families, which can place further strain on the individual's ability to handle stress. In fact, demographic studies by Yankolovich, Skelley and

White and SRI International (Mitchell, 1985) suggest that with all these new family forms, the family, itself, has taken on increasing importance in people's lives and priorities. As one example, the traditional homemaker role now has to be parcelled out among people who have work responsibilities, producing added pressure and strain. Finding balance between work and family roles and fulfilling family needs are key stress issues. Family crises and family changes (separations, deaths, births) are frequent sources of stress that strain a person's adaptive resources.

A workplace that is sensitive, flexible and supportive of these needs can make a significant contribution to helping its employees deal with family stress on the job. Many companies offer day care and counseling for personal and financial family problems. There also are many forms of alternate workstyles that have been implemented to help these new families. Flextime, job sharing, and sabbaticals enable employees to take more time for their families without leaving their jobs. Companies also have modified career path and transfer policies to reflect the increasing importance of family and spouse careers.

THE DESIGN OF WORKSITE STRESS MANGEMENT PROGRAMS

Worksite stress management programs differ in three basic elements: the technique (a focus on prevention, interventions with high risk individuals, or environmental changes); the format; and the skills taught.

Techniques for Managing Stress

Two major preventive techniques have been used in worksite stress management programs to help people manage stress and minimize its negative consequences so it does not become a health problem.

- Teaching people to reduce the negative physical effects of repeated stress. A person can practice physical self-care, using techniques like relaxation and meditation, to maintain personal health. Most company stress-management programs teach these skills.
- Teaching people to recognize sources of stress - at work and in personal life - and to take steps to control them, avoid them, or manage them effectively. This involves improving personal behavior in response to stressful situations and utilizing adaptive skills, such as time-management, direct action, flexibility, and using peer support. These skills are often part of stress-management training and are covered in many company stress-awareness programs.

Two additional techniques for managing stress in the worksite focus on:

- Providing special help for people who react inappropriately to stress. The people at highest risk or who experience the gravest difficulty (such as those who abuse alcohol or drugs), can be coached to modify their self-defeating responses and to overcome or reduce pain and other physical ailments. Company-sponsored employee assistance programs or counseling services are often offered to help these individuals. For example, many companies, after the pioneering efforts at Equitable Life Assurance Society in New York (Manuso, 1978), have included stress management counseling and consultation as part of their executive counseling or employee assistance programs. Since these therapeutic interventions are largely conducted as part of health services, and not as company programs, they will not be covered as part of this paper. (Employee assistance programs are addressed in the WBGH Worksite Wellness Series report on **Alcohol and Drug Abuse.**)
- Changing environmental and organizational causes of stress. Companies can identify aspects of the work setting that contribute to stress - whether environmental, structural, or interpersonal - and create changes designed to reduce stress. This may involve improving protection against toxic fumes, redesigning work stations, or encouraging a more participative management style, such as the use of quality circles. While this potentially could have the greatest effect on stress, at this time it is the least frequently implemented program and also will not be covered in this paper. (Organizational changes are addressed in the WBGH Worksite Wellness Series report on **Healthy Companies.**)

While these latter two techniques have the potential to significantly reduce the negative health impact of stress on employees, neither is usually considered part of company-sponsored stress management programs. Rather, programs for high-

risk employees often are conducted as part of health services (employee assistance programs), and programs to change organizational factors often fall under an organizational development effort or under occupational safety and health.

Thus, worksite stress management programs are designed mainly to teach skills that help people manage the negative effects of stress, learn to be more effective at responding to stressful situations, and overcome the physical effects of chronic stress.

Delivery Formats

Companies deliver their stress management programs in three formats:

- Workshops - programs of varying lengths, conducted by a trainer. These may be conducted at the worksite, or may involve referral to a community program.
- Self-learning - workbooks, audio and video-tapes, and other self-study material to work at one's own pace.
- Personal Coaching - individual help in assessment, planning for change, learning new skills, and responding to life crises.

Most company programs have been delivered in the workshop format, often utilizing self-study material as an adjunct. Personal coaching is often incorporated into employee assistance programs.

Basic Skills Taught

The basic theme of worksite stress management programs is that a person is not a victim of stress. While there are many areas of stress that a person cannot change, there are many ways a person can act to reduce or manage the negative effects of stress. This

is the theme underlying virtually all health and wellbeing. The interventions, then, teach the self-management skills to achieve that goal.

Stress management programs focus on three basic types of skills, relaxation skills, coping skills, and interpersonal skills.

- Relaxation Skills: Various methods to achieve relaxation are such a universal part of stress management programs that they are often perceived to be the whole program. Herbert Benson (Benson, 1975), who conducted some of the original research on relaxation techniques and stress relief, suggests that relaxation methods produce a state that is the opposite of the stress response, and that state helps the body release built-up chronic stress. These techniques include meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, self-hypnosis, guided imagery, and autogenic training. Research studies suggest that these techniques are all easily learned, and have clear psychological and physiological effects on stress when practiced regularly. These skills take care of the body after it has experienced stress, and are very useful to people who work in high-stress environments. (See "Company Examples," Farmers Home Administration, Wells Fargo Bank.)
- Coping Skills: Coping skills offer various techniques for responding to stressful situations. All people develop their own styles of managing pressure situations. Certain styles, such as Type A behavior, and certain types of responses, such as avoidance, inflexibility, or lack of personal priorities, have been connected with difficulty in managing stress. But people can learn and practice effective responses to stressful events.

Three types of coping skills are commonly addressed in worksite programs. (See "Company Examples," IBM, Institute for Labor and Mental Health, Campbell Soup Company, and Honeywell.)

- o Cognitive skills involve changing the way one perceives and defines stressful events. These include personal beliefs, internal conversations, expectations, and evaluations one has about the pressures one faces. Other cognitive skills include exploring and evaluating one's response to stressful situations and creating more effective ones.
- o Time management and life planning. The former involves setting personal priorities, and planning and anticipating stressful events. The latter involves discovering one's personal priorities and acting upon them. Both time management and life planning lead to changes in behavior that meet personal needs, enhance wellbeing, and prevent chronic stress from building up.
- o Managing the emotional aspects of stress, especially anger. In this type of skill training, people learn how to label feelings, as well as how to respond to them effectively.

- Interpersonal Skills: A majority of stress-producing situations involves relations with other people. Managing stress, then, involves learning the skills needed to work harmoniously with other people. This begins with teaching them how to build personal support such as by getting others to help, sharing one's feelings, and seeking out others. The use of personal support is a key method for innoculating oneself against the negative effects of stress. Stress management classes also may feature skills needed in dealing with others, such as assertiveness, active listening, effective communication, conflict resolution, and team building. (See "Company Examples," AT&T Communications, Safeway Bakery Division.) Since these skills often are covered in other management

training efforts, and often are initiated by different divisions of the company (e.g. a training and development department rather than a health promotion department), they are sometimes not explicitly considered when a company defines its stress management effort.

Thus, worksite stress management programs are designed mainly to teach skills that help people manage the negative effects of stress, learn to be more effective at responding to stressful situations, and overcome the physical effects of chronic life stress.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WORKSITE STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Based on the literature on worksite stress management programs and on interviews with some fifty companies, it appears that most stress management programs are implemented because employees perceive a need and request a program. Indications are that in most companies where stress management programs are provided in response to employee requests, they are well attended, and they receive positive feedback when evaluations are done. The programs also are attended by all levels - blue and white collar workers, top, bottom and middle management - all ages, and they are popular with families when families are included. However, it should be noted that there still are relatively few stress management programs designed especially for blue collar workers or for family members.

Some companies also offer individual and family stress assessments. These assessments utilize a number of common risk appraisal and stress scales that are designed to identify high-risk individuals and make them aware of their need for assistance in managing stress.

Companies offer stress management in several modalities and formats. Some are awareness-oriented and are aimed at building sensitivity to stress problems and suggesting effective ways to deal with it. Others are skill-based, training employees in specific techniques and behaviors that can help them manage work stress. Others are therapeutic, and are aimed at people with stress-related problems or high-risk factors.

Worksite stress management programs can be broken into four types, three of which correspond to the aforementioned categories. A fourth category focuses on the company itself.

- Awareness Building - These are lectures and presentations, often given at lunchtime, or written materials such as paycheck stuffers or brochures, that make employees aware of the nature of stress, the danger signs of stress problems, and of what they might do to prevent stress-related problems. These are often used to introduce employees to stress management before offering a more intensive program.
- Skills-Building Classes - These classes, which may run for several sessions, teach basic skills of relaxation and coping with stress. They sometimes contain supplementary self-study material, such as tapes for home practice. Another model is the one or two day retreat that is most often offered to upper management.
- Counseling - Personal counseling, usually for several sessions and sometimes featuring technologies such as biofeedback, help people with special stress problems to make changes.
- Organizational Change - While it is known that many work stressors stem from difficulties in the way the organization operates, such factors are not ordinarily part of stress management programs (which focus on what the individual can do to manage personal stress). However, there are many organizational interventions that have as their goal to reduce stress and raise productivity, but which are not designated or thought of as stress management programs. For example, many companies have instituted extensive Quality of Work Life programs and interventions such as Quality Circles that increase employee participation and thereby reduce stress. Such programs are not covered within this paper because they are usually part of a company's management or organizational development programs. (These efforts are covered in the WBGH Worksite Wellness Series report on **Healthy Companies.**)

EVALUATING STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Recently, two articles have reviewed the research on the effects of stress management programs (McLeroy, et al., 1984, Murphy, 1984). Both articles note that despite the consensus on the role of stress increasing health problems, stress management programs have been neglected as an aspect of health promotion. Both papers review the thirteen studies to date that have assessed the effects of worksite stress management programs.

Murphy summarizes his finding:

- Worksite stress management programs are feasible.
- A variety of techniques can be effective in helping workers reduce physiological arousal levels (rapid pulse, cold sweat, increased blood pressure) and psychological manifestations (anxiety, fright, tension).
- Over time, people who have taken stress management programs feel they handle the phychological manifestations of stress better, but it is questionable whether the physiological changes that have been achieved will endure.
- Programs appear to have the potential to improve worker well-being and to partially offset the costs of stress-related productivity losses and health disorders.

In conclusion, Murphy states, "Rising worker compensation claims for stress-related disability and the knowledge that behavioral factors play a significant role in seven of the ten leading causes of death will likely prompt a significant growth in the use of worksite stress management progrms" (Murphy, 1984, p.11).

Following are summaries of several studies on the impact of worksite stress management programs.

- After studying 52 highway maintenance workers, using a combination of biofeedback training and cassette instruction, Murphy (Murphy, 1984) found that relaxation training significantly reduced muscle tension and perceived stress, and increased quality of sleep.
- Studying 30 insurancecompany employees with headache and anxiety problems, Manuso (unpublished report) found that physiological, psychological, and work factors (absenteeism, productivity) were improved with individual biofeedback training.
- A study of 154 New York Telephone employees (Carrington, et al., 1980) found that a self-taught, home-study framework could produce dramatic reduction in psychological and somatic symptoms six months after training, even in people who were not practicing the techniques regularly.
- Another unpublished study by Control Data Corporation (CDC) surveyed 78 employees who elected to take a self-study course in "How to Relax." Using self-report data, 78 percent reported that they were using at least one stress management technique regularly, 77 percent reported that they payed more attention to the effects of stress, 49 percent used a relaxation technique regularly, and 82 percent rated the course as good or excellent. CDC reported similar outcome data with trainer-led courses, with the only difference being that more people completed the course when it was trainer-led rather than self study. Stress management is CDC's most popular health promotion course.
- In a National Institute of Mental Health-funded effort to explore occupational stress support groups as an intervention to help blue collar and union workers respond to stress, Michael Lerner has found that such a program significantly affects physiological, psychological and work productivity variables (see "Company Examples").

- A related program taught supervisory-level transit employees stress management skills, and instituted a company awareness campaign. Workers' physical symptoms and their perceptions of stress were significantly reduced (ESSI Systems, unpublished report).

COMPANY EXAMPLES - WORKSITE STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

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In 1982, AT&T Communications began designing an integrated health promotion program called Total Life Concept (TLC). Before that time, they had stress management programs, including a videotape on stress and lectures, created by the medical director, that focused on increasing knowledge about stress and awareness of stress problems. With the TLC program, the goal shifted to behavior change.

The basic stress management program has been designed in-house. It is an eight-week course, consisting of weekly one-and-one-half hour sessions. There are three parts:

1) Identifying and recognizing signals of stress (2 weeks).
2) Coping skills - including relaxation, modifying self-talk, emotional skills, time management, assertion, and some nutrition and fitness (4 weeks).
3) Relating to others - including listening skills, self-expression, and dealing directly with difficult people (2 weeks).

AT&T has designed a Trainer's Guide and a Participant's Manual that standardizes the material and presentation so the program can be implemented by the TLC staff at each location. In the future they may hire outside instructors, who also will use the standard curriculum and materials.

The stress management program has two other components. First, there are one-hour education and awareness-building lectures that have been offered to thousands of employees. Second, there is a computerized Stress Audit, an assessment tool that asks questions about nine areas related to stress and offers a score in each area.

The TLC program began in May, 1983. In the first year, the stress program was tested with 93 emplyoyees in New Jersey and 168 people in Kansas City. Since then it has expanded to include at least another 250 people, as well as some special work teams that reported special stress management problems. In the future the program, which is open and without charge to all levels of employees, will be offered throughout the AT&T Corporation.

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Lauve Metcalfe, Director of Program Development
(609)342-3549

Campbell Soup Company's stress management program is part of its Turnaround Health and Fitness Program. Designed to fit the company's philosophy, the program is concerned with its employees' quality of life and healthy lifestyles. Lectures on stress discuss how to cope with stress, the nature of stress, sources of stress, and techniques to deal with stress. Classes, which are open to everyone, include practice of stress management techniques. Sessions vary in length. Many of the one-shot awareness-oriented presentations have up to eighty people in them. In a six-week session meeting one hour per week, about fifteen people get to practice their new skills.

Results from the program have been good, showing that participants have been able to utilize stress management skills in their work and home environments.

Equitable Life Assurance Society, New York, NY
Debra Rothschild, Director of Health Assurance
(212)513-4133

Stress Management is part of both the company health promotion program and its employee assistance program. The company offers each employee a health risk assessment, then assigns the appropriate counseling for the employee. The stress management program consists of audio-visual tapes, discussions, lectures, and practice sessions. Some of the programs meet for only one hour and many involve up to 100 people; others meet for one hour per week for six weeks, and contain up to twenty people.

The objective is to prevent stress by increasing employees' awareness about what personally stresses them. Feedback from the sessions has been good, and people tend to ask for more.

Farmers Home Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C.
Tim Ryan, Director of Personnel
(202)382-1056

FHA's stress management effort has been part of a much broader health promotion program in all of their state offices. The program has been delivered via a number of two- and three-day retreats, with those attending being trained as resource people for other employees. Their model is useful for other companies that have many offices.

The program began in 1982. The first stage involved a three-day retreat, which has as its goal to get the State Directors to recognize how their behavior was related to their stress level

and health status, and to gain their commitment to an extensive program. Several people experienced "abrupt turnarounds," that is, deep personal changes, as a result of this retreat. They, in turn, became the biggest supporters of a continuing program. The program focused on how lifestyles make an impact on health, with the stress mangement component looking at relaxation methods, fitness and diet, and managing pressure situations.

The program has led to each site creating a resource booklet for employees there. Each state office also has a training budget, part of which is allocated to bringing in local experts to teach stress management courses.

Honeywell, Minneapolis, MN
Ben Aune, Corporate Manager of Health Resources
(612)870-3813

Before implementing any health promotion programs, Honeywell sought input from its employees through an employee interest survey. Stress management was one of the highest ranked topics. As a result, stress management programs are now being offered at many Honeywell locations. A major effort involves a national contract between Honeywell and the YMCA to provide courses to all Honeywell field and Information Systems employees. Members of these two large Honeywell groups, totaling nearly 30,000 employeees, are located in every state. All are eligible to participate in a comprehensive health promotion program.

The stress course typically takes place once a week for two hours over eight weeks. Approximately twenty people are in each course, and the company pays fifty percent of the cost. Spouses are encouraged to participate, but they pay the full fee. To date, around 1,000 employees have participated in the various stress management courses offered at Honeywell. In addition to the stress management program, Honeywell offers Employee Assistance Programs for further individual counseling.

Aune believes that if stress is managed properly, it can be a source of creativity and stimulation for many people. Employees often seem to work better with some stress. The program, therefore, does not view stress as always being bad, but attempts to look at stress within a total health concept. Stress vulnerability patterns, attitudes, coping skills and relaxation are explored in the stress program.
Over the last three years, the company also has held weekend health retreats in which stress management plays a large role. The "top down" design starts with the key executives and their spouses. Honeywell offers a similar program at some of its European sites.

Honeywell's efforts to promote health among its employees go well beyond stress management to focus on lifestyles. In addition, the company as a whole is looking at corporate culture change,

trying to create a healthy work environment, healthy people, and a healthy company. They want employees to have work satisfaction and diminished job stress. The annual Honeywell poll shows high employee satisfaction with the program.

IBM, San Francisco, CA
Melvin Bell, Personnel Program Manager
(415)545-6859

IBM offers a health education program titled "A Plan For Life." This program consists of a number of courses related to health, including exercise, smoking cessation, and first aid. The program is available to spouses and their children of fifteen to twenty-two years of age, as well as to retirees.

One of the courses is Stress Management, designed to teach the sources of excessive stress, approaches for channeling and managing stress more productively, and methods for achieving mental and physical relaxation. Stress is viewed in the context of the relationship between mental and physical health. By the end of the program they want people to be able to identify stress and how they can cope with it more effectively. Classes accommodate up to twenty people per session, usually for two hours per week for four weeks. All employees, spouses, and dependent children are allowed to take courses. None is especially designed for either upper or lower management.

There also is an ongoing Employee Assistance Program, which provides counseling for individuals with personal problems, and a Major Medical Program for further assistance to those who may need it.

Institute for Labor and Mental Health, Oakland, CA
Michael Lerner, Ph.D.
(415)653-6166

This worksite stress management program, developed through a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health, creates Occupational Stress Groups (OSG's) through labor unions. This program, offered under sponsorship of several unions, takes a perspective on stress that is sharply at variance with all the company-sponsored initiatives. The program has been extensively researched, with participants in the groups showing significant change in psychological wellbeing, health problems, alcohol consumption, absenteeism, sense of power, ability to handle stress, problem-focused coping, self-blaming and anger, and social support, in comparison to control groups.

OSG's meet for two hours a week, for an open-ended period, usually away from the worksite. Each session has three parts:

1) A presentation about the sources of work stress and its impact on family life;
2) A discussion of how these issues apply in the work world of participants; and
3 A discussion of the relationship of these issues to personal life.

The underlying philosophy of the program is that workers are unfairly blamed, and then blame themselves, for the pressures they face. The program suggests that these pressures are a result of the unfairness and inequity of society. The response to pressures often makes problems worse by isolating people from each other and creating a sense of powerlessness. The groups aim to help people generate solutions to stressful situations by modeling and role playing positive responses to work stress that enhance personal power.

In the focus on personal and social support, this program shares themes with other stress programs. In its focus on the nature of work organizations and the social questions it raises, the program is unique. However, it has been noted that some stress management programs face union opposition and disinterest. This program would suggest that is because those programs lead blue-collar workers to feel that they are responsible for creating their own stress.

The OSG's and this research program have operated for three years, and they sponsor groups in a variety of work settings. Workers involved in the projects had a wide range of jobs including mail sorters, telephone operators and installers, electronics specialists, secretaries, construction workers, hospital lab technicians, and sales clerks at retail department stores.

Safeway Bakery Division, Clackamas, OR
Bob Jacobson, Bread Plant Manager
(503)657-6441

Safeway's "Health in Humor" clinic is a creative company stress-management program. After attending "Health in Humor" classes at a nearby community college, Plant Manager Jacobson decided to bring the workshop to his own employees. The program tries to get people to look at the funny side of life and use it productively.

The program emphasizes that one should not focus on the "negative," but should deal with the "positive." The program tries to change "mind-sets" - the way people view stressful situations. Its goals are:

1) To teach people to laugh at themselves;
2) To teach people not to take life and/or self so seriously; and

3) To plan a course of action by looking at the humorous side of life.

The clinic is conducted through the fitness center, which is funded by employee dues. Program decisions are initiated by employees, then implemented by a fitness and wellness consultant. She, in turn, hires outside consultants or implements some type of peer group action to set up the desired programs.

All employees and their families can attend clinics. Right now programs have up to sixty-five people per session in three, two-hour sessions. Beginning in the fall of 1985, classes for the "Health in Humor" clinic are scheduled during company time. Jacobson feels that the clinic has something of value to offer his employees, so he is, in a way, insisting that everyone at least be exposed to it.

St. Paul Fire and Marine Insurance Company, St. Paul, MN
John W. Jones, Ph.D., Risk Management Division
612)221-7911 or (800)328-2189 ext. 8412.

The Human Factors Risk Mangement Program is used to help companies insured with the St. Paul's install effective stress management programs, control losses and increase profits. The company does a "Human Factors Stress Inventory" consisting of three scales: General Job Stress (emotion and temperament, physical symptoms, and psychological), Organizational Stress (turnover, accidents, and counter-productivity) and Persnal Stress (stressful life changes). The total scores from each employee on the scales are compared to a national norm. The inventory identifies the company's greatest need. The Human Factors Inventory can be considered a stress audit for the company. From the results, possible programs such as workshops and Employee Assistance Programs can be planned. The program assesses all types of stress factors within a company, and puts all the data together to give the company a corporate report.

The Human Factors Stress Survey has proven effective in showing that company insurance claims and losses are indeed related to stress. Departments and job levels determined by the Human Factor Inventory to be at high risk typically exhibit higher rates of accidents, injuries, illness, negligence and counterproductivity (i.e. theft, vandalism and drug abuse) than low risk areas. Companies use information from the survey to correct the organizational factors that lead to these stress-related losses. Company representatives also attend the St. Paul's international Human Factors Institute in order to learn how to implement a variety of programs designed to control stress-related losses.

Wells Fargo Bank, San Francisco, CA
Bryan Lawton, Ph.D., Vice President and Director, Employee Assistance Service
(415)396-3033

Wells Fargo's comprehensive Stress Management Training Program was designed and implemented out of a desire to enhance employees' stress-coping skills, to reduce health-risk factors, to increase productivity, to reduce personal and job stress and conflict, to enhance employee morale, to reduce health and disability costs, and to reduce absenteeism related to illness.

The training is provided by line trainers form each work group who facilitate discussions between video tape segments. This approach allows the training to be provided for each department based upon its unique time demands, and it increases the training credibility, since line trainers can tailor the group discussions to the needs of each specific group. By using individuals in their own groups, the program also enhances team-building and creates an understanding of how stress is transmitted between group members.

The program consists of nine training sessions, each one-and-one-half hours in length. The overall objectives of the course are to increase the employees' awareness of stress and to teach them to manage their stress effectively for maximum performance. Stress management is provided to all employee levels in the organization. It is offered on a voluntary basis with 10 to 15 people per class. The first day of the training examines stress awareness, stress coping style, rational thinking skills, and relaxation training. A week later they learn problem solving and effective communication skills, as well as life planning for balance in their work and personal activities. A month later the group meets again for a full day of training to review the past training, review their Health Risk Profile, and further learn new skills in problem solving, rational thinking, and time management.

Wells Fargo Bank has trained over 1,000 people in the last two years and also has provided the training to Personnel Officers to assist them in knowing when to modify the organization practices or job design that may contribute to job stress.

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All About WBGH

The Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH), established in 1974, gives the business community a credible voice in the formulation of federal and state health policy. Started as a member coalition of large corporations, WBGH began with five companies and has grown steadily to include almost 200 of the Fortune 500 companies. WBGH members direct the health care purchasing for more than 50 million of their employees, retirees and dependents.

In 1976, WBGH expanded to become the first national employer organization dedicated to medical care cost management. Its primary purpose is to identify and enunciate the needs and concerns of large employers. WBGH is an active participant in discussions, hearings and other aspects of the legislative and regulatory arena. It also serves as a reliable resource base providing information and expertise on a variety of health care issues and concerns as well as consulting to its members, government and other employers.

WBGH developed research capacity through its institutes to provide long-range planning and analysis with a corporate perspective. Under the research umbrella are: the Institute on Aging, Work and Health; Family Health Program; Institute for Organizational Health and the Institute for Rehabilitation and Disability Management. WBGH also publishes two magazines, *Business and Health* and *Corporate Commentary*, and other resource information, reports, studies and surveys.

WBGH assists the business community with a speakers bureau, Policy Exchange telecommunications network, and a yearly conference to discuss new health policy issues, cost management strategies, benefits design solutions and health promotion ideas. WBGH has been instrumental in helping form over 35 local business health care coalitions across the nation.